

the area had regained much of its stability, and construction activity began to increase. The area's economy has continued to improve since 1959 and, as a result, construction activity has been increasing every year -- this activity, in turn, has helped to strengthen the local economy.

Considering the future, it is very probable that if the population projections for Whiteville are reasonably accurate, construction activity will become increasingly sensitive to the fluctuations of the local economy.

#### Agriculture:

Whiteville's economy has developed to a great extent around agriculture -- largely tobacco. If the farmers experience a plentiful harvest and receive good market prices, it can be detected in the buoyancy of almost every phase of the economy. Likewise, if the quantity and quality of tobacco are down and market prices are low, there is a general tightening of purse strings often resulting in an economic slump felt by local merchants, bankers, contractors, and all engaged in business activities.

Within the last decade, there are indications that Whiteville's economic dependence on tobacco is beginning to diminish. Year by year, fewer farmers are relying solely on tobacco as their only source of income. Many of the marginal farmers are giving up farming altogether, and those remaining are finding it profitable to broaden their agricultural base by supplementing tobacco with livestock and other field crops that will provide, in most instances, a fairly reliable source of income for those years when the tobacco yields or prices are low.

Within the last few years, an almost unnoticed transition has been occurring in Whiteville's economy; many of the tobacco dollars that have long helped to stimulate the local economy are now being supplemented, and in some instances replaced, by industrial payroll dollars. As a result, the fluctuations in tobacco production and market prices should have a diminishing effect on the economy of Whiteville in the coming years. This